

NEWSLETTER - AUGUST 2009

IN THIS EDITION

Conservation



Partnership Park
Almost official



Wildlife Scouts
The first in-take



Animal Rescue
An Elephant's Ivory

Skills development programs



Sustainable Farming
First success story



Women with strength
The Riverside Institute

Behind the scenes



Play For Life
Season II



Face behind the name
Isaiah Museto

GREETINGS FROM CHIAWA, ZAMBIA

Our previous newsletters were distributed to a limited number of people, directly involved in the Trust. With calls for information about the ins-and-outs of the Trust from far and beyond, the new style newsletter is intended for a much broader audience. This edition focuses on the beginnings of the Trust and will bring our new readers up to speed with our first projects towards the empowerment of the Chiawa community through conservation.

The management of two established community enterprises, the research into various skills development projects and the work towards the reclassification of the Eastern Chiawa Game Management Area to become the Chiawa Partnership Park, did not leave time for much else. But it's time we let you know what has been happening behind the scenes in the Chiawa Chieftdom lately.

The chips may be down in the global economy, but spirits are high in the Chiawa Community as the first LZCT sponsored farm produced a record breaking crop and five ladies from the local craft groups have just commenced formal training at the Riverside Institute in Kafue. Things are hotting up on the soccer fields of Chiawa as the second season of the Play-for-Life League kicked off a few weeks ago. The reclassification of our Game Management Area to a Partnership Park is well underway, with just a few formalities outstanding. With the departure of Ian and Lesley Thomson of Integrated Conservation Africa on expiry of their six month contract, the Trust is now looking to recruit a project team to include a project director, a community project manager and a conservation manager.



WILDLIFE SCOUTS

The first in-take

Conservation

Essential to the Chiawa Partnership Park's wildlife conservation is eradication of all poaching activities within its boundaries. The success of an anti-poaching program lies in three facets: physical anti-poaching patrols, education and the provision of alternative and sustainable income sources. In this edition, we look at the physical anti-poaching patrol units and what it takes to become one of the team.

Taking over the management of a wildlife area from the Zambia Wildlife Authority implies the need for the Trust to manage its own team of scouts to patrol the area as Wildlife Police Officers under the auspices of ZAWA. The training of wildlife scouts, nationwide, is conducted by ZAWA at two training schools in South Luangwa and Kafue respectively. To become a wildlife scout in Zambia requires the successful completion of three months para-military training, which includes rigorous physical training, weapons handling, apprehension and intelligence tactics and in-depth conservation education, all in areas where there is little or no chance to return home for a weekend of R&R. Not for the feint-hearted.

In response to the advertisements, the Trust received 106 applications for training. The job of interviewing the applicants was turned over to Jackson Zindoga, Chairman of the Chiawa Community Resources Board and an advisor to the Trust, who short-listed the applicants down to 27. To minimise the risk of any drop-outs and failure during the training, estimated at 50%, it was decided to subject the group to a final selection course.

Accordingly, two of ZAWA's most experienced training officers, Messrs Mafenyeho and Chigwenembe were brought in from Livingstone and the facilities of Conservation Lower Zambezi were kindly made available for the event. Whilst eight of the applicants withdrew on the first night, the remaining 19 were said to be living in a world of pain and exhaustion for the next seven days, during which time each individual was tested in terms of teamwork, endurance and physical fitness. On completion of what was a very professionally run course, the ZAWA officers considered 16 out of the 19 applicants who completed the selection course to have a good chance of passing the more stringent training at Nyamaluma in South Luangwa. The group set off to Mfuwe on 1 May 2008. The training officers' assessment of the group was excellent in that all 16 candidates passed the Nyamaluma training course with flying colours, with our very own Gift Munyeye coming out on top of the class of 55 trainees in that particular intake. Chieftainess Chiyaba, together with a number of Trustees, was flown up to Mfuwe to attend the passing out parade and review the first team of Chiawa Partnership Park scouts.



Chieftainess Chiyaba inspects the "passing out parade"

ANIMAL RESCUE

An Elephant's Ivory

Conservation Notes



The increase in worldwide demand for ivory puts an enormous strain on Zambia's elephant population and on other species. The most common method of poaching is snaring. Once caught, only an elephant will be strong enough to pull himself free, causing the snare to tighten around the animal's leg, trunk or head, often cutting bone-deep into its flesh. Infections and the huge discomfort ultimately result in a slow and painful death, unless the animal is found in time to be treated. A single poacher can lay up to 40 snares in a matter of hours and will check his snares some days later. If the first few snares were "successful", the chances are that he will not bother with the rest, leaving any animals so caught to die. Snare patrols are an essential preventative measure in our initiatives against illegal poaching. The magnificent elephant bull pictured here had fallen victim to a more target specific poaching method. We found him in agony with five bullet wounds to his stomach which had developed into massive abscesses. After treatment by Dr Ian Parsons, he was back on all fours and has since made a full recovery.



SUSTAINABLE FARMING

First success story

Skills development

How to kill three birds with one stone? 35 residents from the Mugurameno and Chimsambo villages brought us the answer: an elephant-proof fence around a collective farm would provide food security, prevent human-wildlife conflict and reduce the necessity for bush meat poaching.

Clever? They considered it to be pure logic. The only thing keeping them from putting their ideas into practice was the capital to buy and install such a fence. Hence, the farmers submitted an application to the Lower Zambezi Conservation Trust and you could almost say that the rest is history. Obviously it wasn't smooth sailing throughout the project, but teamwork ensured the success of this first LZCT farming project.



Most members of the Cooperative are women

The villagers allocated a piece of land measuring 10.4 hectares and bush clearance commenced by hand in August 2008. Assistance came from various corners as Lendor & Burton levelled the land for a minimum charge with one of their D-6 Bulldozers and transported the bulk of the materials from Lusaka to the project site. A tractor with disc harrow from one of the local farmers, Mr Gerry Carbin, provided the finishing touch to the preparation of the land. Upon advice from Mr Kajiwa, the Chairman of the Area Development Committee and advisor to the Trust, the project members formed a general purpose cooperative, recognised by the Government of Zambia: the Chimsambo-Mugurameno Cooperative. A solar powered, electrified, elephant/hippo-proof fence arrived in kit form from South Africa. Seed maize and fertilizer were bought through ASNAPP. Maize forms an important part of the local staple diet and the members chose four different varieties of hybrid maize, so enabling them to determine which variety would be best suited for the area next season. Planting was done by hand and the rains soon came in abundance. By mid January 2009 the plants were growing steadily. Before elephants, buffalos, hippos and the like could try their appetite on these lush

plants, the fence was erected. A professional technician assisted with the installation of the electrics and trained the farmers in maintenance and repairs to the equipment. Once the fence was energised, some highly amusing accounts of a hippo's first encounter with the fence followed. Ian Thomson further provided the members of the cooperative with basic training in agricultural science and economics.



April 2009 - 10.4 hectare maize farm

An infestation of meal-crickets caused alarm among the farmers in March. Instead of pesticides, the "bucket" approach was taken. Each of the farmers went to his or her dedicated allotment in the field to remove these huge crickets from the plants and so saved their first crop. The farmers also experimented with other produce, such as pumpkins and squash. An overwhelming success rate was achieved and the farm will see a larger variety of vegetables throughout the next season when Phase II of the project will be implemented, providing a simple irrigation system. By the beginning of May, the maize was ready for harvest and a holding area for the cobs was installed within the fence. Approximately 700 - 1000 bags of maize were harvested!



June 2009 - 35 farmers and their first crop

The cobs will be shelled by hand and the farmers will keep their own requirements. The balance will be milled locally and sold. Proceeds of the crop go towards seed, fertilizer and the maintenance of the fence, leaving the final profit to be divided among the members of the cooperative. The Chimsambo-Mugurameno Cooperative is proof that empowerment is possible through skills development and teamwork. Their success has opened the door for many similar Trust projects and the Chiawa Chiefdom is well on its way to independent food security, the reduction of human-animal conflict and a better life-style for its community.



WOMEN WITH STRENGTH

The Riverside Institute

Skills development

Some may think that the Lower Zambezi Conservation Trust community projects represent just another hand-out program for rural communities in under developed countries. Nothing is further from the truth. Each of the community projects sponsored by the Trust is aimed at community empowerment and sustainability through skills development. The advantage of learning a skill is that it provides a lifelong asset that can only improve over time. All that is required is enthusiasm, persistence and technical support. The community members provide the first two components and the Trust adds the balance.

The two Ladies' Craft Groups in the Chiawa Chiefdom are an excellent example of this philosophy. The Chiefdom's main village, Chiawa, has its own ladies' craft group, going by the name of Simba Raishe, meaning "God's Power". This formal cooperative is currently made up of 18 women, lead by Lucy Mambo. The second group, Waka Simba, which freely translates to "Women of Strength" is headed up by Eliza Kalio and includes 26 ladies from three of the neighbouring villages, Mugurameno, Mshonganende and Chimsambo.



Products are aimed at the tourist industry: easy to pack and for every-day use.

One of the typical spin-offs of international tourism has long been the souvenir trade. Whether it is a lifetime collection of holiday memories, a thank-you for a house sitter or simply the need for some retail therapy after a week in the African bush, most tourists are at some point drawn to that one area in a safari lodge: the souvenir shop, looking for something nice that doesn't cause stress in the packing department! Eliza's brother, Leonard, is the senior guide at one of the lodges in the Lower Zambezi Valley. In his 18 years of working with international guests, he noticed that visitors appreciate crafts that have been produced locally. Steering away from the soap-stone hippos and wooden salad servers,

the ladies came up with an original and practical idea to produce sturdy, hessian bags in quirky designs and vivid colours. The groups applied to the Trust for funding towards sewing machines, materials, workshop premises and training. *World Women's Work* and *Equality Now*, two US based organisations, needed little persuasion from Trustee Cheri Briggs to visit the project and commit to its initial sponsorship. Since then, Simon and Jenny Cooke have come on board with further funding from the *Mugurameno Trust*. A big thank-you to all these donors.



Executive Trustees Isaiah Museto and Stanley Chinhoi and Trust advisor Joseph Kajiwa visited the groups.

Jane Krienke, who has recently taken on the position of manager at Mvuu Lodge, meets with the ladies on a regular basis to assist with product development, design and procurement of the necessary materials. The groups can hardly keep up with production and now that the ladies have found the proverbial gap in the market, it is time to invest in training. On 30 July 2009, five of the ladies, including Eliza and Laika Nyadowo from Waka Simba and Lucy, Glory Chalimba and Sarah Kajiwa from Simba Raishe, started their four month professional seamstress and tailor training at the Riverside Institute in Kafue. Cost of the training, board and lodging comes to US\$ 250.00 per trainee. Once the five ladies have completed the training, they will return home to teach their colleagues their new skills before they set out to expand their product range, moving on to other items, embroidery and beadwork. In the meantime, a budget has been drawn up for materials for dedicated workshop facilities, providing a dust free work environment and safe storage for equipment. The local builders will provide the man-power for construction and the groups will enter into an agreement with the Trust to rent the facilities at a nominal rate. Through this project, these women have not just been given a job in tourism, but have started their own enterprise which, with hard work and dedication will provide them with a far greater degree of financial independence.



PLAY FOR LIFE

Season II

Behind the scenes

What are the general benefits of team sport? Besides creating friendship and a level of commitment towards your team players, it ensures exercise at regular intervals, encourages some healthy competition and it is a great way to relax. We think we can take it a step further by adding conservation to the mix. So how does this work?



The future generation - ready to play

The majority of young children prefer to play a game of soccer after school to doing their homework or helping out on the domestic front. With the Play-for-Life program, the kids from the Chiawa community are given the opportunity to be part of their school's soccer team, on condition that they take part in educational projects aimed at both conservation and general health. In April of last year, the Trustees appealed to the tourist operators in the area, external donors and Soccer-Dreams-Without-Borders to sponsor the nine villages, each with five sets of outfits for children and adult soccer teams and for a ladies' netball team. The Play-for-Life launch in Chiawa on 9 June 2009 was attended by Chieftainess Chiyaba, the Minister of Lands and many other dignitaries. During the 2008 Play-for-Life season, Chitende High School headmaster, Levy, focused on village clean-ups, so creating environmental awareness among the youngsters.

The adult teams assisted by digging the rubbish pits and the villages were transformed by the removal of litter. Francis, headmaster at Chiawa Basic School, has taken the lead for the 2009 season and is in discussion with the other teachers in the Chiefdom to implement new projects ranging from waste recycling and tree planting days, to education on prevention of human-wildlife conflict and the influence of poaching. Last year's adult soccer league resulted in the final being played at the end of October between the CLA Mambas and the Chimwaye Zebras, with a clear win for the Zebras. The cup was dedicated to Hovarth, the 12 year old son of Isaiah and Harriot Museto.

Richard Wilson of Ndorochena, soccer fanatic by default and Mambas team member, feels that after the success of the 2008 league, the men are now encouraged to manage the league themselves. The LZCT will assist the league this year with marking the fields and erecting new goal posts. The girls' sports coach, Kena, is confident that the ladies' netball teams will draw the crowds this year. In all, this sports initiative now stands in at 42 soccer teams and 9 netball teams - it's amazing what can be achieved when energy is channeled in the right direction!



Action at the 2008 final

FACE BEHIND THE NAME

Isaiah Museto

Behind the scenes

A lifelong resident of the Chiawa Chiefdom, Isaiah Museto moved with his wife Harriot and their children from his childhood village Chilimanga to Chiawa where he started work as the local Court's Messenger 12 years ago. Now the Court Clerk, Isaiah has witnessed many cases, the majority of which are of a matrimonial nature such as divorce and desertion. Isaiah has always been active in local conservation programmes and it was not surprising that the community elected him to represent the Chiawa and Mugurameno Zones on the Trust Board. Isaiah believes that the reclassification will result in lasting tangible benefits for the area and improve the standards of living through empowerment. After his basic education at Chiawa Primary and Chongwe Secondary, Isaiah completed studies in Agricultural Business. Although he has a fulltime job and is an active and invaluable Trustee on our Board, he finds time to study Business Administration through Preston Distance Learning Institute. Tragedy struck Isaiah's family when their 12 year old son, Hovart, was killed by a crocodile last year. Our hearts go out to the family. This brings home the harsh realities of human-wildlife conflict in our area.





THE FACT OF THE MATTER

LZCT

Behind the scenes

The first feature in this newsletter briefly touches on the objectives of the Lower Zambezi Conservation Trust and its purpose as a vehicle for the public-private partnership to manage the Chiawa Partnership Park, but without going into too much detail on the actual structure of the Trust. The Board of Trustees is made up of both executive and non-executive Trustees and the demographics reflect a real partnership between the Chiawa Community and the Chiawa Leaseholders Association (CLA), the latter representing the commercial operators and private leaseholders in the area. Each partner has three members on the Board. The community chose Douglas Chisango to represent the Kabwadu and Kanyangala zones, Stanley Chinhoi for the Gotagota and Chisakila zones and Isaiah Museto as the representative for the Mugurameno and Chiawa zones, whereas the CLA is represented by Cherri Briggs, Jody Whittall and Tim Featherby. In the formation of the Trust, the steering committee took note of all the various organisations that are

of importance to the success of the reclassification project and to the operations of the Trust. Each organisation was offered a position on the Board. In executive capacities, the Zambia Wildlife Authority is represented by its Director-General, at present Dr. Louis Saiwana and Conservation Lower Zambezi, an established NGO in the area, is represented by one of its board members, Christiaan Liebenberg. Non-executive Trustees are Jackson Zindoga for the Chiawa Community Resources Board (CRB), Joseph Kajiwa for the Area Development Committee, Tresford Musonda, representing the Kafue District Council, Maxwell Syamalimba for the Chiawa Royal Household and Goodson Chenda representing all the traditional Village Headmen in the Chiefdom. Her Royal Highness Chieftainess Chiyaba, who embraces the reclassification project and is highly supportive of the conservation and community projects that have been initiated to empower her community, has accepted the nomination as Patron to the Trust.



IN IT TO WIN IT

Have you noticed the deliberate mistake in one of the photographs published in this edition? Send your answer to info@lzct.org. You could win one night for two at the all new

luxury Baines' River Camp. The winners can also choose to donate the value of their prize to an LZCT community or conservation project of their choice.

COMING UP

In our November edition, we take a look at the role education plays in the fight against wildlife poaching and what it takes to help a snared elephant to survive. Whilst we take a closer look at the day-to-day running of the Chiawa Clinic with its director Charles, the pressure is on the Trust to bring you a positive progress report on the reclassification project. Read about the involvement of the local culture in tourism and how a couple renewed their wedding vows along traditional lines. Until next time...

If you have any suggestions, interesting news you would like to include in our next edition, or if you are aware of someone who would like to receive this newsletter and the following editions, please write to us via info@lzct.org. Alternatively, contact Isaiah Museto on +260 (0)977 890 692.

